CREDOMUN III



PWEC

STUDY GUIDE

Letter from the Secretary-General

It is my team's and my utmost pleasure and honour to host you at the 3rd edition of CREDOMUN as the Secretary-General.

A few days from now, all of you will be walking through the doors of your committees, and while it may seem daunting now, trust me when I say this: it will be one of the most fulfilling experiences of your life.

The three days of the conference are not just about debate, drafting resolutions, or winning awards, but about experiencing something larger than yourself.

This edition of CREDOMUN gives you the platform to explore a wide range of cultures and engage with diverse schools of thought from across the city.

After being honoured with the role of DDG at last edition's conference, I am gratefully excited to host all of you amazing delegates this year as the Secretary-General. This places the utmost responsibility on my team to ensure that you leave this conference having gained something meaningful from it.

While I do not intend to bore you right now whilst you read this note, I must warn you about the time when I will have to give a speech in front of you. At that time, I will take no action to stop myself from being boring and annoying.

Till then, you have everything you could ever need in these study guides and all the time in the world before the eve of the 23rd. I look forward to seeing the ideas you challenge, the solutions you develop, and the memories you create throughout the conference.

With warm regards,
Fazl Abbas
Secretary-General

Letter from The President

Dear Delegates,
It is my humble privilege to welcome you all to the 3rd edition of CredoMUN

CredoMUN has been the focal point of my debating journey, from being a delegate in its 1st edition, then an ACD in its 2nd edition and now the President of the 3rd edition, CredoMUN has truly given me a platform to learn and lead

I have always skipped through the notes in a study guide because why spent time reading the note from someone i dont even know, so please do skip along if I am eating into your limited research time.

The reality is CredoaMUN is truly special because here, delegates can feel at home, debate and have fun, make memories without having to process 5 Bashes at the same time, because at CredoMUN every delegate gets a chance to express themselves, learn how to improve and make unforgettable memories along the way.

As the President of this conference, I promise you all one thing, excellence. Whether it is across exceptional debate, incredible committee topics, or the wonderful people you meet along the way, my team and i ensure that you will be part of the best CredoMUN to date

And if you ever feel overwhelmed by the spectacle, you can always find me practicing a long range volley in our futsal court

Warm Regards,

Saif Khan,
President,
Credo Model United Nations III

Tradition over Progress: Evaluating Workforce Equity and Institutional Reform for Women in Pakistan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Under Secretary General 1

Committee Overview **2**

- Mandate of PWEC 2
- Scope of Debate 2
- Beyond the Scope 2
- Introduction to the Topic 2

Part One: The History **4**

- Customary Foundations and the Colonial Inheritance, before 1970 4
- Constitutional Promise and Reversal, 1970 to 1990 4
- Institution-Building and International Commitment, 1990 to 2009 4
- Devolution and Legislative Expansion, 2010 to 2016 4
- Informal Workers and Digital Work, 2017 to present 5

Part Two: The Present Framework **6**

- The National Legal Architecture 6
- The Provincial Patchwork 6
- Enforcement and Institutional Failures 7
- International Dimension 7
- Bloc Positions and Delegate Strategy 8
- Policy Solutions and Proposed Reforms 8
- Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA) 9

References **10**

Committee Overview

I. Mandate of PWEC

The Pakistan Women's Empowerment Council (PWEC) is a policy forum for examining the laws and institutions that shape women's working lives in Pakistan. Its task is to recommend practical ways to narrow the gap between legal equality and everyday workplace experience. The guide grounds this mandate in Articles 25, 27 and 34 of Pakistan's Constitution, Pakistan's commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions Pakistan has ratified.

For this simulation, delegates may review federal and provincial legislation, recommend minimum standards where protections differ, propose improvements to labour inspection and complaint systems, and consult employers, unions, community and religious leaders, and civil society. PWEC is not a legislature and cannot enact laws on its own. Its recommendations should therefore identify which institution would need to act, what authority it has, and how implementation could be funded and monitored.

II. Scope of Debate

Debate should focus on the legal, institutional and social barriers that limit women's participation in paid work, and on the systems that allow those barriers to persist. Relevant areas include:

- Female labor force participation and occupational segregation.
- Pay equity, job quality and access to promotion.
- Workplace harassment law and complaint mechanisms.
- The legal status of women in informal, home-based, domestic and agricultural work.
- Maternity protection, childcare and the unpaid care burden.
- Safe mobility and transport as a condition of employment.
- Access to credit, land and enterprise support.
- Labor inspection, social security and data collection.
- The division of responsibility between federal and provincial governments after devolution.

Comparative material from other jurisdictions is welcome where it illuminates a workable reform.

III. Introduction to the Topic

Women make up close to half of Pakistan's population, but their participation in paid and other counted economic activity remains far below men's. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Survey 2024–25 reports a female labour-force participation rate of 26.3% for people aged 15 and over under the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) measure, compared with 80.4% for men. Survey definitions matter: figures produced under different ICLS standards are not always directly comparable. Pakistan has constitutional equality provisions, a workplace-harassment law, and provincial laws covering some home-based and domestic workers. The central question is why formal protections have not translated into equal access, security and progression at work.

Women's working lives are shaped by both formal rules and informal expectations about family responsibilities, mobility, marriage and respectability. These expectations can influence whether a woman is able to take-

------ a job, travel to work, keep her earnings or seek help when mistreated. Where institutions fail to enforce the law, social pressure can carry more weight than the rights written on paper. This tension is at the heart of the agenda's title.

The committee should move beyond announcing broad principles and examine how existing protections can work in practice. Weak inspection, limited data, uneven provincial capacity and unsafe or unaffordable transport can undermine implementation. Delegates should consider how to build local trust and recognise women's rights to earn, own and inherit property while ensuring that community engagement does not become a reason to delay equal protection.

Part One: The History

I. Customary Foundations and the Colonial Inheritance, before 1970

Before Pakistan was established, women's economic roles were often tied to household, kinship and land. In rural communities, women contributed to sowing, harvesting, livestock care and food processing, but family labour was not always recorded or paid as work. Islamic inheritance principles recognise women's shares in specified circumstances, yet social pressure and informal transfers have often obstructed women's ability to claim or control property. The extent of these practices varies by region and family, so delegates should avoid treating all communities as the same.

Pakistan inherited colonial-era labour legislation, including the Mines Act of 1923 and the Factories Act of 1934. Such laws often approached women's employment through protective restrictions as well as regulation, rather than through a modern framework of workplace equality. Maternity protections developed in the decades after independence. The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961 changed aspects of family law, while organisations such as the All Pakistan Women's Association, founded in 1949, advocated education and legal reform. Pakistan ratified ILO Convention No. 111 on discrimination in employment and occupation in 1961; ratification, however, does not by itself ensure effective enforcement.

II. Constitutional Promise and Reversal, 1970 to 1990

The 1973 Constitution guarantees equality before the law, restricts sex-based discrimination in specified contexts, directs the state to promote women's participation in national life, and calls for just and humane working conditions. Article 37(e) also refers to ensuring that women are not employed in vocations considered unsuited to their sex, alongside maternity benefits. Critics argue that this wording can support paternalistic restrictions. Delegates should distinguish the constitutional text from interpretations and policies adopted under it.

The 1980s brought a period of legal and social conservatism under the Islamization programme of General Zia ul Haq. The Hudood Ordinances (1979) and the Law of Evidence (1984) narrowed women's legal standing in several respects and signaled to institutions that women's public presence was contested. The period also produced a durable women's movement, including the Women's Action Forum founded in 1981, which became the main civil society voice on women's legal status.

Labour-force figures should be compared carefully over time. Changes in survey definitions and methods can affect whether unpaid family work, subsistence production and other activities are counted as employment. A rise in the measured participation rate does not necessarily mean that an equal number of new formal jobs were created. Delegates should name the survey year, age group and statistical definition when using a figure.

III. Institution-Building and International Commitment, 1990 to 2009

This period saw the growth of institutions and national commitments that continue to shape policy. The Lady Health Workers programme began in 1994 and created a significant source of paid work for women. First Women Bank was established in 1989. Pakistan participated in the 1995 Beijing women's conference and ratified CEDAW in 1996. The National Commission on the Status of Women was established in 2000, followed by the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women in 2002.

The 2002 reforms expanded reserved seats for women in legislatures and in local government, and civil service quotas for women were introduced and later raised. These measures improved visibility, but critics note that women in reserved positions frequently lacked independent influence, and that representation in the civil service was concentrated in lower grades and a narrow set of departments.

IV. Devolution and Legislative Expansion, 2010 to 2016

The Eighteenth Amendment (2010) changed the division of responsibilities between the federation and the provinces, with labour matters largely handled at provincial level. This has allowed provinces to develop different legal frameworks and implementation practices. The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act was also passed in 2010. It established workplace duties, including inquiry mechanisms and a code of conduct, and provided for ombudsperson processes. The law was amended in 2022; delegates should consult the amended text and relevant provincial rules before describing its current scope.

Pakistan also gained leverage through trade. Its GSP+ status with the European Union, in force since 2014, links preferential market access to implementation of core human rights and labor conventions, giving the government an external incentive to report progress on labor standards.

V. Informal Workers and Digital Work, 2017 to present

Recent legislation has increasingly addressed workers outside conventional offices and factories. Sindh enacted a Home-Based Workers Act in 2018, while provincial and territorial laws have also addressed domestic work and home-based work. Punjab enacted a home-based workers law in 2023, and the federal workplace-harassment law was amended in 2022. The exact title, commencement, scope and current status of each provincial or territorial statute should be checked against the official gazette before citation; passage of a law does not establish that registration or enforcement is effective.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many women's livelihoods, particularly where work was informal or insecure. Digital work has created opportunities in freelancing, e-commerce and technology, but it can also expose workers to online harassment and unstable income. In the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' 2024–25 survey, the female labour-force participation rate for people aged 15 and over was 26.3% under the 19th ICLS measure. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index measures a broader set of gaps than labour-force participation alone, so its ranking should not be treated as a direct measure of women's employment. The recurring issue is the distance between formal commitments and their implementation.

Part Two: The Present Framework

I. The National Legal Architecture

A. Constitutional Guarantees.

Article 25 guarantees equality before law and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, while allowing special provisions for women. Article 27 bars discrimination in public service appointments. Article 34 directs the state to ensure women's full participation in all spheres of national life, and Article 37(e) calls for just and humane conditions of work and maternity benefits. These provisions establish the constitutional basis of PWEC's mandate, but they are broad and have not on their own produced enforceable protection at the level of a factory floor, farm or home.

B. The Harassment Act.

The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, as amended in 2022, requires organisations to constitute an inquiry committee, adopt a code of conduct and display it, and provides a route of appeal to the federal and provincial Ombudspersons. Its central weakness is not the text but coverage and use. Small employers often have no committee, complainants fear retaliation, and women outside formal workplaces rarely know the remedy exists.

C. Labour and Social Protection Law.

Minimum wage, social security and old-age benefit laws apply only to registered workers in registered establishments. Because most employed women work informally, these protections miss the majority of the people they most need to reach.

D. Instruments at a glance.

Instrument	*What it does*	*Main weakness*
Constitution, Arts. 25, 27, 34, 37	Equality, non-discrimination, state duty to promote participation	General language; Art. 37(e) can be read paternalistically
Harassment Act 2010 (amended 2022)	Inquiry committees, code of conduct, Ombudsperson	Weak compliance by small and informal employers; fear of retaliation
Maternity and leave provisions	Paid leave and protection for some workers	Patchy coverage; excludes most private, informal and contract workers
Minimum wage and social security laws	Wage floor, benefits for registered workers	Do not reach unregistered or home-based work
Provincial home-based and domestic worker acts	Legal recognition and rights for workers in these categories	Registration and enforcement capacity are limited

II. The Provincial Patchwork

Labour is a provincial responsibility after the Eighteenth Amendment therefore, protection differs by location. The summary below is a starting point, not a substitute for checking the latest official law, rules and commencement notifications before citing a provision.

Sindh. Sindh has been the most active province on informal work, with its Home Based Workers Act of 2018, a domestic workers law of 2019 and a law on women agricultural workers in 2019. Implementation, including registration and access to benefits, remains a challenge.

Punjab. Punjab, the largest province and employer, passed a domestic workers law in 2019 and a home-based workers law in 2023, and has a Women Protection Authority and a Commission on the Status of Women. Its large agricultural and manufacturing workforce makes enforcement at scale difficult.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. These provinces have lower female participation on most measures and, as far as reported, have been slower to enact or implement dedicated protections for informal women workers. Mobility restrictions and security conditions are frequently cited constraints, and delegates should check the latest legislative position for each.

Islamabad Capital Territory, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. The capital territory has its own domestic workers law (2022). Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan sit outside the standard provincial framework and have fewer dedicated statutes and smaller institutional capacity, which delegates may wish to address directly.

The practical result is that a woman's rights at work, and her ability to enforce them, can differ substantially depending only on where she lives.

III. Enforcement and Institutional Failures

A. The Informal Economy Blind Spot. Most employed women work in agriculture, home-based production, domestic service and small enterprises, where there is no contract and no inspector. Legal recognition of home-based and domestic workers is an important first step, but registration, wage setting and dispute resolution remain largely untested at scale.

B. Harassment Mechanisms. Compliance with the committee requirement is inconsistent, committee members are often untrained, and the process can expose complainants to retaliation. Underreporting is the main reason official case numbers understate the problem.

C. Labour Inspection. Inspectors are few, often unable to enter small or domestic workplaces, and rarely trained to look for gender-specific violations such as unequal pay, denial of maternity leave or harassment. After devolution, inspection regimes and priorities differ by province.

D. The Care and Mobility Penalty. Even where jobs exist, many women cannot take them. Childcare is scarce and expensive, public transport is unsafe or unavailable, and harassment in public space shapes family decisions about whether a woman may travel for work. These are institutional gaps, not individual choices, and they are among the most frequently cited reasons for low participation.

E. Data Gaps. Informal and home-based women workers are undercounted in standard surveys, the gender pay gap is rarely measured by employers, and complaint data are not reported in a common format across federal and provincial bodies. Without reliable data, neither the scale of the problem nor the effect of reforms can be measured.

F. Tradition as an Enforcement Problem. Family consent expectations, stigma against certain jobs and early marriage do not appear in any statute, yet they decide whether a legal right is ever used. Reform that ignores these norms tends to produce laws that are passed and not applied.

IV. International Dimension

Pakistan ratified CEDAW in 1996, and is reviewed periodically by the CEDAW Committee and under the Universal Periodic Review at the Human Rights Council, both of which have repeatedly encouraged stronger implementation of women's economic rights. It has ratified ILO Convention 111 on discrimination (1961) and Convention 100 on equal remuneration (2001), and is a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Sustainable Development Goals 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work) provide the framework for national reporting. GSP+ status with the European Union ties trade preferences to periodic monitoring of core conventions.

Comparative experience can help identify options, but policies cannot be transferred without considering local conditions. Bangladesh's garment sector created large numbers of jobs for women, while the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 exposed severe weaknesses in building and workplace safety. India offers comparisons on mobility, safety and the relationship between economic growth and women's employment. Indonesia and Türkiye provide examples of women's participation across different sectors. Delegates should compare the specific policy, outcome and context rather than assuming that one country's model can be copied wholesale.

V. Bloc Positions and Delegate Strategy

Use the positions below as starting points, not fixed scripts. Adapt arguments to the stakeholder assigned by the conference and support them with legal text, data and realistic implementation details. Avoid reducing the debate to a simple contest between "tradition" and "modernity."

Bloc	*Likely position*	*Main tension*
Federal ministries and national commissions	Favour national minimum standards, stronger enforcement, funded Ombudsperson and inspection capacity, and national data standards	Limited authority over devolved labour subjects; fiscal constraints
Provincial governments and labour departments	Defend provincial authority; showcase local laws and pilots; ask for federal funding	Uneven capacity; pressure to explain gaps in protection
Employers and industry bodies	Support incentives, phased compliance, childcare partnerships and clearer rules	Concern about cost and inspection burden, especially for small firms
Trade unions and home-based worker networks	Push for registration, minimum wage enforcement, social security and union rights for informal women	Weak bargaining power; hard to organise dispersed workers
Women's rights and civil society groups	Call for independent monitoring, whistleblower protection & strong sanctions	Limited access to rural and informal workplaces
Religious and community leaders	Stress that Islam recognises women's right to earn, own and inherit; support reform through community persuasion; may caution against measures seen as imposed	Need to distinguish faith from custom without alienating communities
International organisations and donors	Offer technical help and funding tied to measurable results and accountability	Risk of external imposition; sustainability after funding ends
Financial sector and State Bank	Promote women's account ownership, credit lines and digital finance	Collateral requirements and the gender gap in phone and internet use

VI. Policy Solutions and Proposed Reforms

A. Enforcing the Harassment Law. Require annual public filing by employers of committee composition and case outcomes, set penalties for non-compliance, train committee members, and add explicit anti-retaliation protection for complainants and witnesses. Extend access to the Ombudsperson through provincial offices and a toll-free complaints line.

B. Registration and Social Protection for Informal Women. Fund provincial registries for home-based, domestic and agricultural workers, link registration to minimum wage standards, social security and health coverage, and use existing identity and cash transfer systems to reach women who are not in formal payroll.

C. Modernising Labour Inspection. Recruit and train women inspectors, create gender-sensitive inspection checklists, allow targeted inspection of small and domestic workplaces under safeguards, and publish inspection outcomes by province.

D. Care and Mobility Infrastructure. Support employer and public childcare, set standards for lactation and daycare facilities in larger workplaces, expand safe women-friendly transport on high-demand routes, and treat these as labour market investments, not welfare.

E. Pay Transparency and Equal Remuneration. Require larger employers to report pay by gender, enforce the ILO Convention 100 principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and examine the legal basis for restrictions such as Article 37(e) in practice.

F. Finance, Land and Enterprise. Reduce collateral barriers through movable-asset lending, expand digital finance and women-targeted credit lines, and support title and inheritance enforcement so that women can use land as an economic asset.

G. A National Floor and Federal-Provincial Compact. Develop a model law or compact setting minimum standards across provinces and territories, linked to conditional federal funding and joint reporting, so that rights do not depend on postcode while respecting devolution.

H. Data and Accountability. Mandate a common reporting format for federal and provincial agencies on female participation, informal work, pay gaps and complaints, and publish an annual national report on progress against agreed targets.

I. Changing Norms Through Local Legitimacy. Work with community and religious leaders, schools and media to present women's employment and property rights as consistent with local values, and build on programmes that have already succeeded through community trust.

VII. Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

These questions are a checklist for working papers and draft resolutions. A proposal should answer them directly or explain why a matter is better left to provincial discretion. Strong clauses identify the responsible institution, the action required, a funding route and a way to measure progress.

- Should Pakistan set a binding national floor for women's workplace protection, or rely on voluntary provincial adoption, given the Eighteenth Amendment?
- How can informal, home-based, domestic and agricultural women workers be registered and protected without making their work more expensive and therefore less available?
- What penalties, inspection powers and institutional changes would make the harassment law enforceable in small workplaces, and how can complainants be protected from retaliation?
- Who should fund childcare, safe transport and inspection capacity: federal government, provinces, employers or donors, and how is the cost to be shared?
- Should employers be required to report gender pay data, and what standard is realistic given the size of the informal sector?
- How should reforms engage religious and community leaders and address family consent norms without conceding legitimacy to practices that restrict women's rights?
- To what extent should Pakistan's approach be shaped by CEDAW, ILO and GSP+ commitments, and what tension exists between those and domestic political constraints?
- Should Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan be brought within a national standard, and through what mechanism given their constitutional status?

- What standard should govern the collection and publication of national statistics on women's work and workplace complaints so that progress can be measured against a common baseline?

References

This list identifies core sources for further research. For legal claims, use the official Constitution, statute or gazette. For statistics, record the survey year, age group and definition used. The notes in this guide are a starting point; delegates should verify the current text and latest available data before citing them in committee.

• *National Assembly of Pakistan. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973.*

• *Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, and the 2022 amendment.*

• *Sindh Home Based Workers Act, 2018; provincial domestic workers acts (Punjab and Sindh 2019; Islamabad Capital Territory 2022); Punjab Home-Based Workers Act, 2023.*

• *Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Labour Force Survey 2024–25, Annual Report and Employment Trend Report 2025.*

• *Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan. Pakistan Economic Survey (latest edition).*

• *National Commission on the Status of Women and provincial commissions on the status of women: annual and thematic reports.*

• *Ministry of Human Rights, Government of Pakistan. National Gender Policy Framework, 2022.*

• *World Economic Forum. Global Gender Gap Report (latest edition).*

• *International Labour Organization. NORMLEX: Ratifications for Pakistan; ILO Conventions Nos. 100 and 111.*

• *UN Women, UNDP and World Bank country reports and data on women's labour force participation in Pakistan and South Asia.*

• *CEDAW Committee. Concluding observations on Pakistan; Human Rights Council. Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan.*

• *Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and other research institutes on women and work.*

• *Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Publications: https://www.pbs.gov.pk/labour-force-publications/*

• *ILO NORMLEX, Ratifications for Pakistan: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103166*

• *Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH): https://fospah.gov.pk/*

• *National Assembly of Pakistan, Acts of Parliament: https://na.gov.pk/en/acts-tenure.php*